

January 28, 2003

TO: Regional Administrators
CSO Administrators
Community Services Division

FROM: Roxie Schalliol, Director
Division of Employment and Assistance Programs

Michael W. Masten, Director
Community Services Division

Rob. St. John, Director
Information Technology Division

SUBJECT: WORKFIRST BUDGET REDUCTIONS – EARLY EXIT BONUSES

As you know, we must address a \$35 million deficit in the WorkFirst budget by the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2003). These are difficult economic times and state resources are not keeping pace with demands on services. Governor Locke has directed officials to maintain certain core values of the program:

- The safety net of temporary welfare grants;
- Open-door access to child care for the poorest working families;
- Incentives that make work pay more than welfare; and
- Vocational training for better jobs for low-income parents.

One solution developed to help resolve this budget deficit is to eliminate early exit bonus payments effective February 1, 2003. Clients who received the first \$500 installment of an early exit bonus on or before January 31, 2003, however, will still qualify for their second \$500 installment.

Attached you will find the proposed WAC that will be filed by emergency adoption effective February 1, 2003 and the revised WorkFirst Handbook material at http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ESA/wfhand/support_exit.htm. We are also in the process of removing conditional text on ACES letters 002-01, 002-02, 021-01, and 027-01 that refers to the early exit bonus as quickly as possible. Until we are able to make this

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change, please let clients know if they call for information about the bonus that it is no longer available.

E-JAS will be modified on February 1, 2003 so that case managers will no longer be able to generate the first \$500 installment of the early exit bonus. Headquarters staff will still be able to generate this payment for the next couple of weeks under the exception to rule process. We will only approve these requests if the client was promised the bonus and will face an emergency if they do not receive it.

DEAP staff are available to meet with you to discuss this change if needed. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Jsames at (360) 413-3239 or jsamesm@dshs.wa.gov.

Attachments

cc: Penny Black
Mike Brady
Bobbi Hickox
Rena Milare
Mary Lou Percival